



NEWS

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
L.A. County Board of Supervisors, 2nd District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Ridley-Thomas Supports Gang Plan, Urges 'Urgent'
Adoption of Countywide Violence Reduction Strategy**

LOS ANGELES COUNTY – Describing the public safety concerns about gang violence in his district as “urgent,” Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas today urged approval of the County’s long-awaited plan to deal with gang violence.

After much discussion and revisions to add additional demonstration sites to the plan, the Board unanimously approved the proposed Countywide Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy that will include pilot projects in the Florence/Firestone area of the Second Supervisorial District, as well as Pacoima, Harbor Gateway and Monrovia-Duarte areas.

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas commended the work on the plan to date, but added that there is still a lot more work to be done and a clear need to launch the concept immediately. “I believe that we have to lock in on the notion that this matter is urgent,” Ridley-Thomas said.

While suppression of gang activity is a necessary approach, prevention and intervention efforts are equally critical to prevent at risk youth from seeking affiliation with gangs.

“Prevention has to be aggressive; intervention has to be far more creative than it's been in past efforts; and suppression has to be proactive,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas added, “A comprehensive look needs to be taken at how we deal with the issue of at-risk youth and the culture of gang violence that has left many communities virtually paralyzed.”

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Supervisor Ridley-Thomas agreed that the plan must be approached with a good deal of thought and consideration, to include the following:

- Offer specialized intervention strategies for people who exhibit risk factors for gang membership or who are already in a gang;
- Develop re-entry and re-integration strategies for former gang members returning to a community;
- Crack down on hardcore gang members;
- Ensuring that county departments coordinate when providing a variety of services to residents.

Once success has been established at the demonstration sites, the programs are expected to be expanded throughout the county. The strategy also includes the creation of the Los Angeles County Gang Prevention, Intervention and Suppression Coordination and the creation of one new staff position and staffing support from various county departments. The plan will bring together regional agencies to suppress gang violence, while attacking its cause development.

“Over the next 120 days, we need to talk specifically about our goals, targets, objectives, and deliverables, that we are moving toward. Many entities have a role to play. Everyone has to own this problem. It is a crisis. The matter is urgent and we should not treat it as it is routine.”

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